

HOUSE SUMMARY OF SENATE AMENDMENTS

House Bill No. 591 by Representative Ellington

ETHICS: Makes changes to laws within the jurisdiction of the Board of Ethics

Synopsis of Senate Amendments

1. Adds an exception to the ethics code to allow a public servant to accept complimentary admission to a civic, non-profit, educational, or political event when the public servant is attending the event to assist an elected official who is a program honoree, giving a speech at the event, or a panel member for a discussion occurring at the event when the public servant is under the supervision of the elected official and such assistance is within the ordinary employment duties of the public servant.
2. Provides a restriction on the exemption to the \$50 limitation on food, drink, and refreshment for a gathering held in conjunction with a meeting related to a national or regional organization or a meeting of a statewide organization of governmental officials or employees; the restriction requires that at least 10 people associated with the organization be invited to the gathering.

Digest of Bill as Finally Passed by Senate

Present law (R.S. 42:1111 and 1115 – ethics code) prohibits public servants from receiving things of economic value from certain persons or for certain duties. Present law (R.S. 42:1123) provides certain exceptions, including allowing a public servant to accept complimentary admission to a civic, non-profit, educational, or political event when the public servant is a program honoree, giving a speech at the event, or a panel member for a discussion occurring at the event.

Proposed law further allows a public servant to accept complimentary admission to such events when the public servant is attending the event to assist an elected official who meets the provisions of present law when the public servant is under the supervision of the elected official and such assistance is within the ordinary employment duties of the public servant.

Present law (R.S. 42:1115.1) prohibits a person from whom a public servant or public employee is prohibited by present law (R.S. 42:1111 and 1115) from receiving a thing of economic value from giving to such a public servant or public employee any food, drink, or refreshment the total value of which exceeds \$50 for a single event at which food, drink, or refreshment is given. Present law specifies that the limit does not apply to a gathering held in conjunction with a meeting related to a national or regional organization or a meeting of a statewide organization of governmental officials or employees.

Proposed law retains present law, but further requires that at least 10 persons associated with the organization be invited to the gathering.

Proposed law further clarifies that "gathering held in conjunction with a meeting related to a national or regional organization or a meeting of a statewide organization of governmental officials or employees" includes both an event held during the same time period and in the same general locale as a meeting of such an organization and to which some persons associated with the organization are invited and an event that is part of the scheduled activities at a meeting of such an organization and open to persons attending the meeting.

Present law, relative to lobbying of the legislative branch and relative to lobbying of the executive branch, requires certain expenditure reports. Present law exempts from legislative lobbying laws any expenditure for any reception or social gathering sponsored in whole or

in part by a lobbyist or on behalf of a principal he represents held in conjunction with a meeting of a national or regional organization of legislators or legislative staff and provides a similar exemption in the executive branch lobbying laws for similar events held in conjunction with a meeting of a national or regional organization of executive branch officials.

Proposed law provides instead that expenditures for any such reception or social gathering shall be reported by including the name of the organization, the date and location of the reception or social gathering, a general description of invitees, and the amount of the expenditure. Further clarifies that for the purposes of the lobbyist disclosure laws, the provisions of present law include any expenditure for a single activity, occasion, reception, meal, or meeting held during the same time period and in the same general locale as a meeting of a national or regional organization to which some persons associated with the organization are invited or that is part of the scheduled activities at a meeting of such an organization and open to persons attending the meeting.

Proposed law declares the provisions of proposed law (excluding the provisions regarding the reporting of expenditures relative to lobbyist disclosure) to be remedial, curative, interpretive, and procedural and therefore are to be applied retroactively as well as prospectively.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 24:55(D)(2) and (E)(2), R.S. 42:1115.1(E)(1) and (F) and 1123(13)(a)(i), and R.S. 49:76(D)(2) and (E)(2))